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[For text illustrating various manifestations of Gullah phonological and grammatical constructions, see Categories 538 and 539.]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

subtropical location, one can find men, women, and children sitting in kitchens smelling the welcome aroma of "hoppin John and bone" cooking in a pot or just sitting, smoking pipes (men and women smoke pipes on the Sea Islands), and watching the torrential rain beat against the windowpanes. The best stories I collected on the Sea Islands and in Africa, however, were ones I heard at night in front of the fireplaces when all the daily tasks were completed, supper had been served, the children had been bathed, and everyone was relaxed, content, and gazing into the open fire. The fire had a hypnotic effect, and one's imagination could easily see forms amid the light and shadows of the flames while one listened to the teller unravel his tale.

During the cold season on the Sea Islands (*harmattan* in Africa), yams (or *ji*, the Igbo name for a kind of potato) are often covered with the hot coals of the fire, baked, and offered as refreshments to the entertainer, who never seems to fail to make his tale more pleasing as a result. Gin, homemade brews, and other warming drinks are often passed around if there is a good group of tellers and listeners. In Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio villages fresh palm wine, chilled or served at room temperature, and cola nuts are always welcome refreshments during storytelling times.

Though everyone is potentially capable of telling a tale, I soon learned that not everyone can tell a *good* tale. Sea Island informants with whom I spent much time over several years often attempted to tell stories only in an effort to help me along with my work. Others felt a strong need to compensate me for coming such a long way to talk to them or to hear their stories. Thus they made efforts to tell tales even when the occasion was not conducive for a telling to begin. In this situation the teller was often tense, rushed, and unprepared to do his best; the tale would often be confused, lacking in plot, and generally uninteresting. But it is well known among the islanders and the Nigerians who the good storytellers are, and after some time I was directed to those tellers well known for their performances of the oral traditions and gifted in the oral technique. In the words of one of the islanders, "some people de gift for lie." The world *lie* has more than one denotation on the Sea Islands: it not only means that one is not telling the truth; it is also a term associated with any kind of fictional tale told primarily for entertainment.

There are certain cultural taboos associated with Sea Island storytelling. More men than women tell tales. Men are expected to be

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PRONOUNS	PERCENT USAGE OF FORMS								Total No. of Occurrence
Person Gender Case	BASILECT		PRENESOLECT		MESOLECT		ACROLECT		
	form	%	form	%	form	%	form	%	
3 ♀ N	im	0	i	55.2	hi	16.4	ʃi	28.4	67
3 ♂ O	am	71.5	i	4.5	im	21.0	him	3.0	61
3 ♀ O	am	74.2	i	3.2	ʃi	12.9	hɔz	9.7	31
3 ♂ P	im	13.8	i	62.1	iz	20.7	hiz	3.4	29
3 ♀ P	im	0	i	83.8	ʃi	16.2	hɔz	0	6

TABLE 3.2. (THIRD PERSON) PRONOUNS WITH FOUR VARIANTS

3 ♂ N	im	3.6		i	77.6	hi	18.8	165
3 ϕ N	im	13.2		i	84.2	it	2.6	38
3 ϕ O	am	96.0		i	2.0	it	2.0	51

TABLE 3.3. (THIRD PERSON) PRONOUNS WITH THREE VARIANTS

♀ = Feminine
♂ = Masculine
ϕ = Neuter
N = Nominative
O = Objective
P = Possessive

Two tables are required to show a systematic distribution of third person singular pronouns in Gullah. One table contains pronouns with four variants while a second table contains pronouns with three variants. On the surface, the system seems more elaborate and complicated than that of its English superstrate. But the variants represent levels of Creole speakers and possibly stages in the acquisition of standard English. For example, to produce a semantic equivalent of *her* in the sentence *I know her*, a speaker will select a pronoun from his repertoire of rules governing third person objective forms. The one that

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193 is selected will depend on the speaker's knowledge of
•196 Gullah and standard English, as well as social factors such
[199] as audience, age and education. According to the data, there are four forms from which a speaker may select:

1) If the speaker is basilectal or wishes to appear as such, he will select /ɔm/ and produce /ɔɪ nuo ɔm/ 'I know her';

2) If the speaker has acquired a rule for the use of /i/, then he will say /ɔɪ nuo i/ 'I know her';

3) If the speaker has a grammatical rule for the use of a form distinguishing male from female, then he will probably say /ɔɪ nuo ʃi/ 'I know her';

4) Finally, if a speaker has acquired the acrolectal feminine, he will say /ɔɪ nuo hɔɪ/ 'I know her'.

193 Few speakers use all four variants, offering some credibility to DeCamp's theory that each creole speaker masters a span of a language acquisition continuum, and that no speaker masters both extremes unless he masters the intermediate varieties as well (DeCamp 1971).

But data in this study support the hypothesis that it is possible for a child growing up in a Creole-speaking community to learn to use the pronouns /ɔm/ and /hɔɪ/ (both polar forms) to mark third person feminine objective case without having acquired a rule for the use of /hi/ to mark feminine object.

The third person singular pronouns in Gullah are discussed according to case and frequency of occurrence. It will be shown that the status of a form may vary

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

BAPTISM

On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song, sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers, with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"--but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same thing at all.

After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the African manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

[12] Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't want any talkin' or laughin'.--Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas. This ain' no time for it."

[13] In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use of words make curious mistakes.